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Technical experts' perspectives of justice-related norms

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Technical experts' perspectives of justice-related norms: Lessons from everyday environmental practices in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Development and environmental conflicts have increasingly featured divergences between representations of justice provided by environmental management policies and demands of justice claimed by local affected social groups (Martin et al. 2014). If local affected people perceive environmental policies as not reflecting social objectives, or as 'unjust,' the effectiveness of management practices can be undermined (Mariki, Svarstad, and Benjaminsen 2015). To align environmental management with local justice demands, it is vital to understand the governance processes and power relations between policy actors through which any environmental policies are interpreted and implemented (Jacobi et al. 2017). As international environmental governance initiatives and national governments have increasingly sought to influence local environmental practices, linking local social and environmental objectives with international and national governance practices can potentially reduce any negative impacts of management practices on forest-dependent communities (Sikor et al. 2014).

A multifaceted framing of environmental justice has become influential for identifying, explaining, and addressing uneven distributions of environmental impacts on forest-dependent communities and other socially marginalized groups. Historically, environmental justice has focused on 'distributive justice,' which investigates the fairness of the distribution *outcomes* (Bullard 1994). While the concept of distributive justice remains essential, a multidimensional frame of environmental justice has integrated 'recognition justice,' addressing the *processes* that result in unjust distribution (Young 1990). Recognition justice explores how misrecognition of culturally suppressed identities and worldviews can lead to distributive injustice. Another dimension of justice, i.e., procedural justice, explores fair public participation processes and outcomes; key issues include legitimacy, transparency, and accountability in institutional decision-making (Suiseeya and Caplow 2013).

Norms related to environmental justice have become discernible both in local struggle claims (Temper et al. 2018) and global sustainability objectives (Sikor and Newell 2014). Critical institutional analysis, mainly its focus on norms (Ostrom 2009), has contributed to understanding how justice perceptions are shaped in natural resource management (e.g., Agarwal 2001; Ribot 2012). Essentially, norms are the customary rules about the way things should be and ought to be done in particular contexts. Others, including Acharya (2014), Cleaver (2012), and Paavola (2007), further reconceptualize institutions in environmental governance central to justice-related norms. Such norms are the socially determined rules of fairness in travel between people and in the allocation of social goods. Postcolonial feminists have broadly recorded norms that can shape ideas of justice in a wide range of environmental governance phenomena. As an example, indigenous studies have investigated discrimination and marginalization of indigenous worldviews in neoliberal conservation and development initiatives, resulting in claims of injustices and conflicts (e.g., Li 2014; Doolittle 2010). Gender studies have portrayed misrepresentation of top-down management tools enshrined in patriarchal institutions and the socio-environmental struggles asserted by women in land practices (e.g., Deere and Leal 2001; Nussbaum 2000). Other studies expand the knowledge sphere of justice-related norms, illustrating the importance of meeting societal standards on dignity (Su and Mangada 2020), sense of belongings (Eckenwiler 2018), and community benefits (Cowell, Bristow, and Munday 2011) on improving social acceptability of environmental management strategies in specific cultural structures. These insights show that social expectations of justice are unique to local contexts, but they are not solely locally-constituted. Negotiations at various sites and on different platforms by actors from global to local scales can affect how justice is delivered to forest-dependent communities.

Environmental governance is a multi-scalar and dynamic process, where both formal governmental regulations and local customs contribute to shaping practical arrangements and outcomes of environmental and development policies (Acharya 2011). To transform externally-conceived norms, for example, related to justice, from the international or national level into

the sub-national practice, involves the interplay of various intermediary actors from the government, civil society, and the private sector (Dawson et al. 2018). These intermediary actors may represent diverse stakeholders and carry out formal and informal roles in interpreting and implement national policies on forests, land, and other natural resources in a particular social context (Cleaver 2015).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as the world's most widespread environmental policy tool, and its role in bridging local justice concerns and global sustainability goals is essential in many natural-resource-rich countries where EIAs are the only environmental policy tools that are publicly acknowledged (Lawrence 2013; Morgan 2012). The UN Environment (2018) also identifies EIA as a crucial platform for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other related frameworks such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. EIA is relevant to distributive justice because its objectives are fundamentally concerned with the impact of project actions on specific groups or populations (Walker 2010), while engaging cultural minorities' voices may also promote recognitional justice in decision-making procedures (Hanna et al. 2014). Procedural justice concerns the 'effectiveness' of EIA, with literature exploring to what extent the formal procedure of EIA addresses specific goals (procedural outcomes) and how the practice of EIA achieves those goals (substantive outcomes) (Cashmore et al. 2010). Numerous studies have explored the barriers to effective participation in EIA faced by local communities (Cashmore and Axelsson 2013; Morgan 2012); however, few have examined the barriers created or faced by those involved in delivering the EIAs, and their potential to influence the substantive outcomes and the incorporation of justice in project negotiations.

Through exploring the perspective of intermediaries involved in everyday EIA governance practices at the sub-national level, this article addresses three questions: 1) What are EIA intermediaries' perceptions and prioritizations of justice-related norms? 2) What structural factors influence the travel of justice-related norms between governance scales? 3) Through which platforms do those EIA intermediaries negotiate justice-related norms?

Using semi-structured interviews, this article explored a case study of EIA in Indonesia to investigate the perspectives of sub-national intermediaries involved in its technical review process, from governmental agencies, private consultancies, and academia. Indonesia has one of the world's highest deforestation rates, and EIA acts as one of the criteria for granting licenses for development projects (Swangjang 2018), yet critiques of its fairness persist. This article contributes new empirical evidence and insights to the everyday environmental arrangements regarding justice, as shaped by sub-national intermediaries.

2. Literature review: Critical institutionalism and travel of justice-related norms

This article uses a critical institutionalism lens and pays attention to the power relationships underlying people's interactions that shape resource management arrangements and outcomes (Cleaver 2012). In contrast to the assumption of an optimal institution (Ostrom 2002), which considers the relationship between policy and local practices as direct and linear, Acharya (2004) proposes a critical approach emphasizing the complexity of institutions entwined in everyday social life. Both structural factors and individual choices, particularly the role of local actors, are considered in shaping local governance arrangements (de Koning 2014; de Sardan 2015). That said, local actors are not passive followers of predetermined, top-down objectives, but actively negotiate and shape norms through a combination of resources and capabilities in certain normative beliefs and social contexts (Coggan et al. 2013; Kumar 2014; Mukhtarov 2014).

Conceptually, this approach shows that norm diffusion and development is not solely a downward process from international to local scales. Instead, national and sub-national actors can influence global objectives of environmental governance from below (Hargreaves et al. 2013; Schomers, Sattler, and Matzdorf 2015). They may seek to create a transnational justice network in mobilizing local struggles (Caouette 2007), offer knowledge services to facilitate interactions among actors (Sternlieb et al. 2013), and collaborate to shape the outcomes of environmental governance (Schröter et al. 2018). Transforming justice-related norms into

local environmental governance practices remains challenging due to barriers of local implementation capacity and to ideological differences in the conceptualization of justice amongst various actors (Dawson 2018). To enable the integration of local justice concerns into environmental practices, they need to be represented and mobilized in policy negotiations which is often through the representation by intermediary actors.

Intermediary actors from governments, private sector, and civil society (e.g., policy managers, environmental consultancies and NGOs) engage in both formal decision-making settings and informal processes, such as protest, media, and other lobbying approaches, which influence norms formation and travel (Funder and Marani 2015). These intermediaries perform as brokers in development (de Sardan 2005) who seek to or are claimed to represent objectives held by local people in the environmental governance practices (Sikor et al. 2019). They may work vertically between governance levels and horizontally across platforms and issues, attempting to (re)interpret and (re)constitute the objectives of environmental management, such as those included in policies, to find congruence with local customs and priorities (Lewis and Mosse 2006; Mosse 2005). It is noted that intermediaries may not act consistently for local interests. Instead, they may prioritize individual or organizational agendas or represent contested causes for different stakeholders in different forums (Booth 2012). The perspectives of intermediary actors with regards to justice are influenced by certain social and cultural context, and the intermediaries' norms related to justice and the communities who they are speaking for can therefore affect how they interpret and mobilize local concerns of justice.

Young (1990)'s and Fraser (2008)'s arguments on recognitional justice, which emphasize political domination and oppression underlying the causes of unjust distribution of social goods, can be used to understand the intermediaries' norms related to justice. Fraser (2007) argues that misrecognition is constructed in institutional subordination, meaning the interests and values of culturally privileged groups define peoples' institutional experiences in society. In contrast, culturally suppressed identities and communities are often not recognized,

misrecognized and disrespected by other social members. Such subordination is deeply tied to economic inequality and this inequality must be examined in a particular cultural and social context rather than ideal procedures. It is because institutional, social and cultural structures that construct and mediate social relations are keys for explaining why some social groups have more privileges in accessing social goods than others (Young 1990, 22). It is therefore crucial to understand the actors the intermediaries interact, collaborate with and represent, and the factors underlying the choices made by intermediaries, especially about the justice-related norms they prioritize and the type of platforms they use to articulate their agendas (Dawson et al. 2018).

Institutionally, physically, and socially derived resources are necessary to access power by intermediaries in their attempts to influence the process and outcomes of environmental governance. Rules, either constitutional or regulative, can be institutional resources for those who have more experience of using those rules in advancing their objectives (Hrabanski et al. 2013). For example, studies have questioned the practices and representations of enforcing the law through the legal use of violence by state agents (see the volume by Blundo and Glasman (2013)). Moreover, travel of justice-related norms can be enabled or restricted by the extent to which minorities' voices are engaged in institutional platforms (Eastwood 2011; Sikor and Câm 2016). For instance, intermediaries may find it challenging to include indigenous worldviews in decision-making when national policies provide little recognition of customary land rights (Papillon and Rodon 2017).

Effective norms travel may be enabled when intermediaries have access to physical resources (e.g., proper work facilities) and social resources (e.g., close relationship with other actors) (Bosselmann and Lund 2013; Pham et al. 2010). In contrast, articulating justice-related norms may, in turn, constitute a source of power by providing intermediaries with a justification for resource access, such as external funding and knowledge support (Lindell 2009; Sikor et al. 2019). Studies of the role of intermediaries in facilitating the travel of justice-related norms are still emerging (Dawson 2018). For an improved understanding of the

practices of these intermediaries, this article, therefore, draws attention to the interactions between different intermediaries within project debates in the EIA process at the sub-national level.

Researchers and practitioners of EIA have increasingly acknowledged that a rationalist EIA model, which favors the setting up of 'best practice' and pays little attention to the power relations in the implementation processes, is deficient in achieving substantive outcomes of sustainability and justice (Rozema et al. 2012; Walker 2010). Literature has started to explore political and social factors affecting the effectiveness of EIA at multiple scales. For example, Connelly and Richard (2005) revealed the structural barriers to mobilizing environmental justice values in the commonly expert-driven approach of EIA, which have prioritized procedural elements of justice, rather than facilitating discussions about the costs and benefits linked to local culture, i.e., distributional justice. Williams and Dupuy (2017) found that the rationalist approach of EIA did not always match the local context of environmental decision-making, which has increased the vulnerability of the EIA procedure to corruption and results in ineffective participation. Studies related to power and political dynamics remain underexplored, and technocratic approaches that seek the 'best practice' of EIA still dominate scholarly attention (Cashmore and Axelsson 2013). The role and influence of various actors, especially the intermediaries, in achieving equitable outcomes from EIA remain limited. This article, which considers the perspectives and prioritization of intermediary actors around issues of justice, is thus instrumental in improving the understanding of the formation and implementation of just local governance arrangements.

3. Methodology

3.1. Case study

EIA, locally referred to as AMDAL (*Analisis Mengenai Dampak Lingkungan*), was introduced into Indonesia in 1982 during Suharto's authoritarian regime. The AMDAL system aims to make management plans to prevent, minimize, mitigate or compensate for

adverse impacts identified. The granting of an environmental permit (*Izin Lingkungan*) through AMDAL is a prerequisite for the operation of large-scale development projects and therefore a vital, if limited, environmental safeguard mechanism in Indonesia. Following the country's decentralization in 1999, AMDAL introduced a participatory mechanism. AMDAL legislation also requires particular attention to the communities and vulnerable groups potentially affected by any proposed land-use project, and calls for respect for local knowledge of land-use practices.

AMDAL is arguably the only public policy tool that requires public participation in environmental decision-making in Indonesia. Critiques of its fairness however have pointed out the procedural nature of AMDAL which serves as a mere formality instead of a meaningful participation platform to land-use decision-making (Hasan, Nahiduzzaman, and Aldosary 2018; McCarthy and Zen 2010; Purnama 2003). Studies, investigative reports and news revealed that public consultations during AMDAL often involve only businesses and political ruling elites, such as village heads, religious chiefs and landowners. These actors, however, are usually assumed to represent the voices of various stakeholders (Leitmann and Dore 2005). Also, local stakeholders often have limited access to project information or a low capacity to fully engage in the decision-making. For example, local stakeholders do not often understand the purpose of AMDAL (Qipra 2005) and the implications of attending public consultation (Gore and Fischer 2014). Issues of corruption also persist as barriers to just AMDAL practice and forest governance in general in Indonesia (Muslihudin et al. 2018). These conditions therefore enable the investigation of plural ideas of EJ in this study.

The processes of AMDAL consist of public consultation, review of impact analysis, and environmental permit granting. The review of impact analysis in AMDAL comprises two stages: technical evaluation and impact management evaluation. This article focuses on the institutional intermediaries involved in the technical evaluation as they directly engage in the interpretation and implementation of national environmental policies.

Technical evaluation of AMDAL is conducted under each national, provincial, and district environmental authority. According to the Government Regulation No. 27/2012 on Environmental Permit, the intermediaries involved in the stage of technical evaluation are ecological and social experts (usually from local universities and research institutes), governmental officers who work in various agencies responsible for environmental impacts control (such as agriculture, forestry, and land-use planning), and environmental consultants whom companies hire to conduct impact analyses. These technical experts negotiate the project's compliance with laws and regulations, the scoping of the impact study, the methodology used for data collection and analysis, and the feasibility of impact management and monitoring plan. Their inputs are then considered in the second stage of impact review (see the perspectives and roles of intermediaries in impact management evaluation in Lai and Hamilton (2020)), which will result in a final decision regards environmental permit granting.

3.2 Study methods

The findings were based on fieldwork conducted in East Kalimantan province between February and July 2018. Natural resource exploitation has dominated the economy of the province, which had led to numerous development projects applying for AMDAL review each year. Simultaneously, land-use conflicts related to environmental degradation have arisen as the majority of the population still live in rural areas and are dependent on forest resources (Fünfgeld 2016).

A total of 38 intermediaries, i.e., technical experts of AMDAL, participated in this study. These comprised 26 governmental officers, six academics, three academics who also worked as consultants, and three consultants; who between them represented a wide range of disciplines and fields, including forestry, agriculture, hydrology, biodiversity, health, labor rights, sociology, spatial planning, and transportation. Three environmental agencies in the province provided lists and contacts of the technical experts. Due to a considerable number

of consultants being available, the consultant candidates were selected based on three criteria: 1) the person was handling at least one AMDAL project during the fieldwork period, 2) the person was based in East Kalimantan (in consideration of research budget and time constraint), and 3) at least three other technical experts recommended the person. Conventionally, some consultants may be included in the work team of any AMDAL project as a nominal head and not involved directly in the analysis of the AMDAL projects. The environmental agency is also not usually informed if a consultant leaves the position or changes the contact. Seeking recommendations from other experts is therefore useful for ensuring that the researcher approached the interviewees who are relevant to the issues studied.

The intermediaries consulted were mostly senior staff in their organizations with an average age of 46 years old (between 32 and 67 years old, excluding one interviewee whose age was unknown). Thirty-five of the 38 interviewees were male. This study identified only three female government officers during sampling, and all three participated in the interviews. There was no female academic registered in the technical teams visited and no female consultants were recommended by three other technical experts. Geographical information and some information sources in Section 4.3 were anonymized to maintain confidentiality. Participants granted consent to publication based on the confidentiality of these data. The interviewees' information is in the appendix, where actual jobs are not shown, but grouped into broad categories.

This study included a total of 46 semi-structured interviews. Some individuals were interviewed more than once for either completing the question sets or answering follow-up questions. Some of them contributed more inputs than others, which could imply more influence on our findings. All interviewees were consulted for all questions designed in this study nevertheless. Interviews were held in either public space (e.g., a coffee shop) or private office/meeting room in the interviewees' workplace, except one in a shared workplace and two in the interviewee's house. The conversations lasted on average 1.5 hours, ranging from

30 minutes to 3 hours. Language use was based on the preference of the research participants; most of them communicated in a mixture of Indonesian and English, while some used either language alone throughout the conversation. The first author of this paper is fluent in both of these languages and conducted all the fieldwork and interviews for this research.

Interviews consisted of three sets of open-ended questions. The first set of questions explored the experience of the intermediary - as well as those of other intermediaries they knew - in participating in the AMDAL review and sought to capture their perspectives of justice as a technical expert. The intermediaries got to know the other intermediaries through sitting on the reviewing meetings together; some of them, however, were also colleagues in the same organization or had collaborated on other projects beyond the technical review of AMDAL. The second question set investigated the social and cultural contexts underlying the AMDAL policies and practices, and the barriers to the travel of norms as perceived by the intermediaries. The final set of questions explored the challenges faced by the intermediaries in negotiating their agendas and the opportunities identified, or the strategies used in overcoming those challenges.

Interviews were audio-recorded after explaining the research objective and obtaining informed consent. The respondents' permission for recording was reconfirmed when the conversation involved sensitive topics. Data were transcribed and analyzed through thematic coding to identify the intermediaries' perceptions and prioritization of justice-related norms under the category of justice-related issues, factors to norm travel, governance scales, and platforms of norm travel. The justice theme explored the prioritization of distributive, procedural, and recognition justice norms in environmental governance. The factors to norm travel recorded the factors facilitating or constraining the travel of norms. The governance scales captured how norms travel between the national, sub-national, and local levels. Finally, the platforms of norm travel illustrated the type of platforms (formal or informal) the intermediaries used to pursue their agendas and the actors they interacted with.

4. Results

4.1. Intermediaries' perspective of justice-related norms in the AMDAL process

This section discusses intermediaries' perception and prioritization of justice-related norms. Norms related to distributive justice and procedural justice dominated the interviews, while the intermediaries discussed little issues about the recognition of minorities' values. Distribution of the responsibility of impact management was the primary concern of the intermediaries, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

“Companies should fulfill their commitments on compensation, employment, and impact management [...] it is their responsibility.” (Senior government manager)

“Some local NGOs and people are passionate about conservation but have limited abilities [...] Who should bear the cost of empowerment? Is it the company, the government, or the people?” (Former senior government manager)

The intermediaries consulted highlighted concerns about the disparity in recipients of the costs and benefits associated with the developments addressed by the AMDAL, including between 1) national and sub-national government; 2) companies and local communities, and 3) current and future generations:

“Those companies take our coal, but we do not get money in return. Profit goes to the central government.” (Academic and consultant)

“Companies leave with resource and profit. Local people stay and bear the consequences.” (Government officer)

“AMDAL covers only the [responsibility of] impact [management] within a project period. But many impacts are irreversible and will be inherited by future generations.” (Former senior government manager)

317 The discussion also related to procedural justice, focused on *how* to empower existing
318 participants, namely the opinion leaders of local communities and NGOs, rather than
319 questioning *who* should participate. The technical experts commonly expected AMDAL to
320 open up political space for negotiating land-use decisions:

321 “AMDAL allows a space where companies, communities, and NGOs can negotiate. I hope local
322 communities use this chance to understand the impacts and make sure their concerns are answered.”
323 (Senior government manager)

324 AMDAL has also provided a legislative ground for supporting the objectives of
325 sustainable development, as perceived by the technical experts:

326 “Which company does not pursue profit? Which community does not want a comfortable life [...] But
327 whether a project is [environmentally] feasible, there are laws to follow.” (Former senior government
328 manager)

329 Finally, the intermediaries considered AMDAL as a tool for empowering local
330 communities by offering a platform for knowledge building:

331 “Public consultation should inform local communities on the project impacts [...] Not just tell them how
332 much they will be compensated.” (Academic)

333 “People often discuss their concern about diseases in the meeting. I use this opportunity to explain to
334 them” (Government officer)

335 While the interviewees commonly perceived that, as AMDAL technical experts, they are
336 neutral to project interests, they were skeptical of their influence on decision-making:

337 “The technical team just gives suggestions [on the impact analysis]. The company decides whether to
338 accept it.” (Senior government manager)

339 As a result, several intermediaries were discouraged from contributing to meaningful
340 AMDAL debates, instead approaching it as a routine task to fulfill:

341 “I give comments based on my knowledge. However, the companies and the people might not like it [...]
342 Just let them do whatever they want.” (Government officer)

343 A lack of influence on decisions coupled with low motivation leads to the question of
344 whether the intermediaries have adequately safeguarded the quality of impact analysis. Some
345 interviewees were concerned about the accountability of intermediaries:

346 “People who are involved in AMDAL should be accountable for their opinions [...] They could not just
347 speak whatever comes to their mind.” (Government officer)

348 “We are just brokers – neither do I have influence on nor liability to decisions.” (Government officer)

349 Related to *who* participates, the intermediaries had little engagement in the discussion
350 or promotion of recognitional justice. The interviewees were asked to talk about issues of
351 indigenous land rights and participants’ identities (usually male, landowners, and opinion
352 leaders) and most were satisfied with the existing arrangement of public participation:

353 “It is fair enough to involve local opinion leaders [...] More people, more chaos.” (Former senior
354 government manager)

355 “Landowners and local opinion leaders [*tokoh-tokoh masyarakat*] are invited to public consultations.
356 Landless people are, of course, welcomed to join, but it does not really concern their interests.”
357 (Environmental consultant)

358 While the interviewees were not particularly concerned about gender issues in the
359 technical team and public participation, some had voiced their opinions:

360 “No one deliberately excludes women from participating [in the technical team]. Sometimes there is no
361 suitable candidate.” (Academic)

362 “Women usually do not attend public consultations because they need to take care of housework [...]
363 Husbands represent the family, so it is all right.” (Academic)

Notably, most of the interviewees were male, and only three female technical experts were identified and interviewed in this study. All interviewees, including the three female intermediaries, reported that they did not know of any other female technical experts. Besides, the technical experts consulted were mostly senior staff based in an administrative center (e.g., a capital city) and are not originating from rural communities that are affected by the AMDAL processes. Their seniority at work may affect their social status, social capital, and their perspectives to justice. The technical experts of AMDAL paid more attention to the issues related to distributive justice (i.e., cost and benefit) and procedural justice (influence and transparency of decision-making), rather than recognition justice, including the participants' gender and social status, which raises the question of whether the technical teams have adequately represented various stakeholders' interests.

4.2. Structural factors to norms travel between governance scales

Social and cultural contexts underlying environmental policies and practices, particularly those perceived by the intermediaries, can affect the formation and mobilization of justice-related norms in multi-scalar environmental governance. The prioritization of distributive and procedural justice is reflected in the intermediaries' perspectives of how a 'fair' AMDAL practice ought to be. The interviewees pointed out some emerging concerns on distributive and procedural justice raised by the stakeholders. Regarding distributive justice, the interviewees identified the changing global perceptions of social impacts and sustainable development, which AMDAL should follow.

"Minimizing social impacts become important [...] Foreign investors are concerned about their reputation and hesitated to invest in conflicted areas [...] The government needs to listen to this call."
(Academic and consultant)

"Some investors want us to use international guidelines, such as RSPO [Responsible Sustainable Palm Oil] and FPIC [Free, prior, and informed consent] to conduct impact analysis. AMDAL needs to keep up to those new ideas of sustainability." (Environmental consultant)

Increasing calls on public participation and pressure from expanded media reach have led to more emphasis on equitable distribution of benefit and cost and decision-making procedures, as observed by the intermediaries.

“Local people are increasingly concerned about their rights in decision-making. Now the AMDAL authority has to deal with it carefully.” (Government officer)

“The government can close its eyes to project impacts when the public did not know what happened. They cannot do that anymore. As soon as there is protest, the whole country is informed by various media.” (Academic and consultant)

The interviewees also highlighted the political dynamic around environmental governance as some discussed the impacts of decentralization on local governance arrangement:

“Autonomy is good. Districts have stronger power in deciding for activities like forestry and mining. We work more efficiently.” (Former senior government manager)

“In the past, anyone can conduct impact analysis. Now [after decentralization], the consultants need to attend official training and get certified.” (Academic and consultant)

Several structural barriers have constrained the mobilization of justice-related norms within the AMDAL debates. Many intermediaries pointed out the contested principles of market-based environmental management, which hindered them from advancing sustainability goals. One interviewee, for example, discussed the rising price of coal and increasing mining activities at the time of fieldwork:

“International market decides supply, demand, and the price. We do not have much say on people’s decisions on their land.” (Senior government manager)

Some found it challenging to implement top-down policies that were constituted on the international or national level at the sub-national level due to lack of applicability to the local physical and social context:

“International donors do not understand the situation here. They can travel from one country to another in a few hours, while it may take us a day to move between two villages. Now, they complain about our efficiency.” (Senior government manager)

“Developed countries are those who can focus on environmental impacts. We [local officers] need to take care of many problems at the same time, and every single one of them is urgent.” (Government officer)

“This country consists of thousands of island and ethnicities [...] The central government should not apply a single set of regulation to all regions” (Government officer)

Patriarchal norms held by the intermediaries have also restricted the mobilization of norms related to recognition justice:

“Some multinational companies wanted to involve women in public consultations [...] Those women found it stressful to speak publicly. This is disrespectful. Now I do not allow companies to force women to participate.” (Senior government manager)

Hierarchical bureaucracy cultures have also limited open conversation and the mobilization of justice-related norms in general. Several interviewees perceived that it could affect their organizational or personal interests if they openly object to the authority of their superiors:

“Better not to say ‘no’ to the [AMDAL] reviewers. I do not want to annoy them, in case it affects [the result of] the application.” (Environment consultant)

“I was promoted [as the senior government manager of the anonymized environmental division] from another agency. I had known nothing about the environment [...] I was not obliged to accept that offer.

436 However, if I disobeyed my superior, I might never get promoted again.” (Former senior government
437 manager)

438 Intermediaries such as the technical experts of AMDAL were observant of the emerging
439 norms related to environmental justice in local governance due to their close interaction with
440 various stakeholders and policies and have provided meaningful insights to understanding
441 existing and emerging values in the implementation of environmental policies. The political
442 and economic objectives embedded in the international and national policy frameworks have
443 also significantly changed the processes and outcomes of the intermediaries’ everyday
444 practices at the sub-national level. Enabling the mobilization of justice-related norms between
445 governance levels thus requires the understanding of the role of culture and capacity to find
446 congruence with global sustainability objectives.

447 **4.3. Platforms through which norms travel in the AMDAL process**

448 This section demonstrates some institutional, physical, and social resources and platforms,
449 through which justice norms travel in the practice of AMDAL. As the criteria for verifying
450 project feasibility, many intermediaries considered the spatial plans (*Rencana Tata Ruang*
451 *Wilayah*) made by provincial, district, and in rare cases, village governments to be particularly
452 useful and supported them in negotiating the outcomes of development projects. Ambiguous
453 or lack of land use planning, in contrast, has caused social conflicts and increased their
454 workload as they must mediate those conflicts:

455 “If a project does not fit the land-use plan, I can reject it immediately. It is straightforward - there is no
456 space for negotiation.” (Government officer)

457 “The regional land-use plan is ambiguous [...] We [the technical team] are forced to make critical
458 decisions on land-use, which is not under AMDAL’s authority.” (Senior government manager)

459 To mobilize justice-related norms effectively, the intermediaries had discussed the
460 need for setting up institutional strategies for two-way communication between the technical

team and the licensing authority. Some interviewees, for instance, shared their concerns about the transparency of decisions made on license granting because they could not follow up on the process of decision-making:

“I do not know if the consultants understand my feedback or if they revise the analysis based on my recommendation [...] We [the technical team] do not get to see the final report. There is no follow-up.”
(Academic and consultant)

“I send the [commission’s] decision to the licensing agency. However, I do not know if the applications are approved or rejected at their end. There is no means to monitor the process of permit issuance.”
(Senior government manager)

The intermediaries also found it hard to promote the value of sustainability and public welfare within the existing legislative framework that has prioritized economic growth, as shown in the following quotes:

“Economic growth is prioritized over social welfare. AMDAL aims to reduce the impact, not to remove them. What a committee can do is limited.” (Government officer)

“Provincial profit comes mainly from natural resource [exploitation]. If we were too strict with these activities, the profit decreased. The budget for environmental management would also decrease. This is the dilemma.” (Senior government manager)

Interviews revealed that institutional resources were inadequate to support the technical experts in advancing justice and sustainability values in the AMDAL negotiations. Addressing these structural constraints thus requires attention on not only the norms included in environmental policies but also the national policies of decentralization in a broader context.

Turning to physical resources that have affected everyday governance arrangement and provided platforms for the travel of justice-related norms, the intermediaries identified opportunities that both enabled or restricted their pursuit of organizational and personal agendas, including those related to environmental management. Although the interviewees

struggled to navigate their organizational and personal goals within the growth-oriented governance setting, they recognized that an improved financial condition of local governments has also improved their working conditions. Proper physical facilities and resources are perceived as essential to support the intermediaries in negotiating and mobilizing their prioritized values in local environmental practice. Infrastructure, such as road, airport, and mobile phone coverage, have enabled information exchange and access of knowledge service beyond an administrative territory, which has been particularly useful for areas that have limited institutional, physical, or social resources:

“It lacks environmental experts in this area, so we need to invite technical reviewers externally [...] A good review is only made possible by fairly-built roads or airports.” (Former senior government manager)

“There is an online forum of AMDAL where people exchange information and experience. Anyone may ask questions about a certain location or [analysis] method or update any regional laws and regulations.” (Academic and consultant)

The interviewees also demonstrated that the use of remote sensing and other technologies has provided supportive tools to achieve their work goals in an improved work environment:

“It is more efficient to monitor forest fire by satellite – the cost is lower, and it is safer for our staff.” (Government officer)

“Now, we use mobile devices to conduct the survey. It improves work conditions in the field [...] You can also check if the person-in-charge fulfill their tasks” (Government officer)

“We should use digitalized reports in AMDAL; the data archive will work better [...] The public can access the data online.” (Former senior government manager)

In contrast, the intermediaries perceived that access to high-quality data, including data scale, consistency, and access, have been significant barriers to a fair evaluation of

AMDAL. High-quality data therefore will be required for providing concrete scientific ground to support intermediaries in project negotiation.

“It does not make sense to assess the impact on a village when the analysis is done at the district level. [...] We compromise because that is the only official data available.” (Government officer)

“If I wanted to be perfect, I would need to collect data from several agencies and crosscheck them. However, you do not know whether and when they will reply. Furthermore, no one knows which set of data is the updated one for sure.” (Environmental consultant)

Socially-derived resources and platforms that can affect the mobilization of norms largely concerned the social relationship and interaction between the official and unofficial actors involved in and affected by the AMDAL process. While many claimed that they did not have a personal interaction with the unofficial actors who worked beyond the institutional debates of AMDAL (i.e. military actors, police, and politicians), the interviewees generally perceived the strong influence of those actors on the outcomes of their everyday practices and involvement in AMDAL as shown in the following quotes.

“There was this time when I could not proceed with an [AMDAL] application because it had lacked a document from [an anonymized governmental agency], which I had followed up for three months. One day I received a call from a general, asking about the process of this application [...] The document I wanted was put on my desk the next morning.” (Anonymized technical expert)

“It is hard to challenge a project, especially during an election year [...] Politicians need company sponsorship, they may take the money and intervene [the license granting process].” (Academic)

How ‘closely’ the technical experts interact with each other has also affected the processes and outcomes of project negotiations in AMDAL. The governmental representatives were often chosen for different project reviews depending on their superiors’ arrangement. Several interviewees commented that they hesitated to engage in the discussion when they were unfamiliar with the other technical experts. In contrast, some found it harder to work with colleagues who collaborated with them in other programs:

537 “The heads of the [governmental] agencies may assign different staff to participate in different projects
538 [...] I know who represents which agency, but I do not know if I can count on their expertise.” (Senior
539 government manager)

540 “I wanted to speak my mind frankly, but I do not want to be harsh [...] It would be easier if I could work
541 with the people who know my personality.” [Senior government manager]

542 “It is harder to give critical comments to a project if I know my colleague in the university conducts its
543 analysis.” (Academic)

544 While corruption persisted as a significant concern of promoting equitable decision-
545 making at the sub-national level, interviews revealed that issues of corruption should be
546 considered alongside the power relationships that have encouraged or eliminated the behavior
547 of corruption. The results presented until now show that several social and cultural factors have
548 contributed to maintaining the status quo of the management system and associated power
549 inequalities. Namely, patriarchal norms that have suppressed the voices of less powerful ones,
550 including landless people, indigenous people and women, prior to decision-making;
551 hierarchical bureaucracy norms that has encouraged individuals’ agendas on dominance and
552 promotion for securing greater power in the organizations; complex organizational structure,
553 clear cut assignment of functions, and lack of communication between divisions that have led
554 to lower commitment to accountability; and finally, top-down and market-based management
555 principles that allow little space for negotiations of norms to sub-national players.

556 People’s interactions, which are formed through these societal norms and the favoring
557 of those high in social dominance, promote corruption by enforcing power and status
558 inequalities in the organizational structure. For instance, two anonymized governmental
559 intermediaries perceived that they had been relocated to other departments due to their
560 rejection of bribery. Unequal power relationships also contribute to preserving the role of
561 corruption by rationalizing or legitimatizing the unethical doings as ‘culturally-fit.’ Being
562 involved in corrupted practice was not only for the monetary gain but also seen as a social norm

in the sense that the intermediaries perceived they might also, in turn, need to bribe if they wanted to fulfill their tasks. In contrast, they would be socially penalized when they did not accept bribery, as illustrated in the following quotes:

“There was pressure from the top and bottom [to receive bribery]. The colleagues teased me. You make yourself unpopular if you do not corrupt [...] My wife might blame me if she knew I had rejected the bribery.” (Anonymized technical expert)

“You would never get things done if you do not give money. The officers might say ‘you lack of this or that document’ or ‘the person-in-charge is not here’ [...] If you give money, half-day.” (Anonymized technical expert)

“We have a budget for bribery. You would know how to include this in the budget if you worked here [...] You need this to get things done.” (Anonymized technical expert)

Issues of corruption can be coupled with low monetary and psychological incentives of carrying on equitable practices for the intermediaries. The technical experts were often overburdened by their workloads and worked part-time to make ends meet due to a low salary:

“I do not feel appreciated [...] I work as a lecturer, consultant, in AMDAL, and for other commissioned works [...] I work so hard just to make ends meet.” (Academic and consultant)

“It is hard to nurture good technical staff in this civil servant system. Not only have you needed to master the skill, but also to learn many regulations. It is hard to compete with the private sector by lower pay and higher commitment.” (Senior government manager)

Interviews also revealed psychological rewards that were important for motivating the intermediaries, notably the recognition of skills and in compliance with personal goals:

“I am not trying to win acclaim but to make good use of my knowledge. However, it is hard when you work in the government.” (Government officer)

586 “I quit consultancy to join the technical team [...] I earned more as a consultant. But I hope my
587 knowledge can contribute to something bigger.” (Academic)

588 The intermediaries perceived that common understandings of justice and sustainability
589 goals were important for enabling such norms to travel vertically and horizontally. Not only
590 should the intermediaries improve their knowledge of global environmental agendas, but also
591 those whom the intermediaries seek to influence:

592 “There is no training in reviewing AMDAL. We review the reports as we perceived as fair [...] If the
593 authority does not prioritize the same thing as I, the project which I rejected might be approved anyway.”
594 (Government officer)

595 “I only know about the importance of sustainability after I got trained. However, the district/provincial
596 heads never get trained [...] How do I persuade them to prioritize sustainability despite other agendas?”
597 (Former senior government manager)

598 The intermediaries also provided useful insight into the potential of the private sector
599 in advancing justice-related objectives in environmental management. Any empowerment
600 initiatives should thus engage the private sector and identify the support needed by various
601 private sector actors in achieving justice-related agendas. While the private sector actors were
602 often perceived to create constraints to mobilize justice-related norms in local environmental
603 practice, all interviewees had some experience of positive collaboration with private sector
604 actors:

605 “I suggested some companies to include free health service, which the government cannot afford, as part
606 of their impact management. They agreed and implemented those programs with district health agencies.
607 Sometimes companies simply do not know what they can do.” (Government officer)

608 As the primary actor in environmental management, the private sector, especially local
609 companies on a smaller scale, has not been fully engaged with local environmental
610 management agendas, as perceived by the intermediaries. Identifying the barriers to executing

management responsibilities faced by the private sector thus may enhance the mobilization of justice-related norms:

“Smaller companies cannot afford a good consultancy service. They do not know how to judge the quality of the analysis, or whether their consultants did their job.” (Academic and consultant)

“Companies often do not understand what they had committed [...] They only realize they did not have enough budget or ability when they started to implement the management plan as they had promised.” (Academic)

Interviews with these intermediaries have contributed to understandings of the institutional, physical, and social resources and platforms affecting the (re)production, consolidation, and mobilization of norms, including those related to justice, in the sub-national environmental management platforms. Unequal power relationships and social status have initiated and enforced patriarchal and hierarchical norms and have promoted the role of corruption in the EIA process. Most intermediaries therefore perceived EIA as constrained forums for debating the principles of environmental policies and negotiating justice-related norms compared to international and national arenas, and actively opted out of such debates. The resources identified have focused on those platforms which facilitate the travel of norms across the actors at the sub-national level. The interviews also portrayed the intermediaries' perspectives on the influence of unofficial actors and informal relationships on their practices. Further focus on identifying who the unofficial actors are, how they are involved in the decision-making arena, and the extent to which they influence the formation and mobilization of justice-related norms in local environmental management will be useful to support intermediaries in the environmental practices.

5. Discussion

This section highlights our findings on the dynamics of justice brokerage through EIA intermediaries in Indonesia, and discusses its implications on the three key fields of inquiry,

i.e., environmental justice, critical institutionalism, and effectiveness of environmental impact assessment.

Firstly, we argue that traditional social norms underpin the ideological differences on environmental justice. Environmental justice is conceptualized as being achieved through three interlinked dimensions, which are distributive, procedural, and recognitional justice (Schlosberg 2013; Sikor 2013). Our findings revealed that these justice elements were prioritized unevenly by the intermediaries spoken to. Distributive and procedural justice-related norms were their primary concerns, while the objectives of recognitional justice were largely neglected. Power inequalities underlying the EIA process are found to promote recognitional injustice, as consistent with the works by Young (1990) and Fraser (2007; 2008). Traditional patriarchal norm persisted in the technical team also raises questions as to recognition to and equitable participation of culturally marginalized ones in the EIA practices, given inadequate attention paid by the intermediaries to unequal power relationships around gender, indigeneity, and class. Although the intermediaries did not bring up or discuss ethnicity as a factor, this paper acknowledges that ethnicity may play an underlying if minor role. While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide an in-depth perspective of the implication of ethnicity on justice brokerage, this may be an area that should be included in further research.

The interviewees' lack of awareness of recognitional justice has also created barrier to justice in the EIA process. Some consultants, government officers and academics interviewed positioned themselves as more 'objective' in the EIA process, emphasizing their technical and legal knowledge in evaluating project impacts in the way they deem to be 'fair.' Our findings, however, show that those intermediaries often fail to recognize and challenge the governance system that has excluded alternative voices in the first place. Such a pattern of prioritization to norms related to distributive justice was also reflected in the intermediaries' interpretation of stakeholders' interests underlying the EIA policies and practices. Namely, the market-oriented

principles and top-down policies imposed on local environmental practices have affected how they approached the emerging concerns of global sustainability agendas.

Additionally, hierarchical work cultures endorsing power and status inequality help preserve the roles of unofficial actors (i.e., military actors, police, and politicians) and corruption in the EIA process, which further constrain the production and mobilization of norms related to recognition justice. The EIA practices at the sub-national level therefore fall short of producing justice for the communities affected, as argued by Hasan, Nahiduzzaman, and Aldosary (2018), and yet the EIA intermediaries continue to adopt these practices. It thus allows for the involvement of the intermediaries in local EIA practices into empty mechanisms, whereby both the state and other powerful actors can maintain the rhetoric of justice and portray an image of fulfilling their justice obligations. Taking into account that a technical review process is commonly one of the initial stages in defining the scope of impact management in an EIA process, institutional participation of diverse cultural groups in the technical team will be required for promoting more equitable and sustainable outcomes of local environmental decision-making.

Turning to our second field of inquiry, i.e., critical institutionalism, we argue that a complex organizational structure and lack of collaboration between divisions, in this case, have affected the intermediaries' prioritizations and strategies of mobilizing justice-related norms. The decision-making process of EIA in Indonesia is divided into several stages (public consultation, technical evaluation, impact management evaluation, and license granting) in the decentralized governance system. The technical experts involved in this bureaucratic process have been constrained to other stages beyond their set roles in the technical evaluation of EIA. These institutional barriers embedded in the policies have hindered the technical experts from assessing the outcomes of their efforts and discouraged these intermediaries from investing efforts in the EIA practices and processes.

Also partly because of their set role as a technical reviewer, the intermediaries have emphasized the use of scientific knowledge and data to enable the mobilization of their agendas, instead of local justice concerns, contrasting to other findings (see Lindell 2009; Sternlieb et al. 2013). The intermediaries in this case study had attempted to mobilize their interpretations of justice horizontally within the sub-national level among their superiors and cohorts, aligning with previous studies (see Coggan et al. 2013; Hargreaves et al. 2013). However, these intermediaries tended to accept the existing policy framework of EIA and the institutional roles assigned without seeking to influence or intervene in policy-making upwards, in contrast to the theoretical expectation of promoting bottom-up policy formation through intermediaries (see Caouette 2007; Schomers, Sattler, and Matzdorf 2015; Schröter et al. 2018; Sternlieb et al. 2013).

In seeking collaboration to influence environmental outcomes as suggested by Schröter et al. (2018), the technical experts spoken to tended to work with other sub-national and technical actors, instead of connecting with civil society organizations and local communities as having been identified by Funder and Marani (2015). More importantly, the government officials consulted were moved from post to post and there was no culture of developing a deep professional profile in the EIA practice. Continued loss of experience by intermediaries can stem the travel of justice-related norms in local environmental practice as the same justice claims may be repeatedly encountered with no procedural learning.

Our findings further covered institutional, physical, and social resources and platforms that are instrumental in enabling the mobilization of justice-related norms horizontally within the sub-national level. Social relationships among various official and unofficial actors (Pham et al. 2010) is a significant consideration of the interviewees in their EIA-related decision-making. Not only may intermediaries prioritize different agendas in different social settings or forums, as others have found (Booth 2012; Hrabanski et al. 2013; Papillon and Rodon 2017), but our findings also suggest that a poor work environment and low incentives can influence the agendas they prioritize. Therefore, proper working conditions (Bosselmann and Lund,

2013), including workload, incentives, and safety, are critical for motivating intermediaries to engage in the environmental negotiations actively. Even though it is beyond the scope of this study, the literature in interactional justice which emphasizing the connections between the perceptions of justice and organizational behavior (see Bies 2015; Zapata, Olsen, and Martins 2013) may be beneficial to further studies on the production and mobilization of justice-related norms through intermediary actors in environmental institutions.

Finally, we argue for the significance of justice brokerage in affecting the effectiveness of environmental impact assessment. The issue of effectiveness in achieving sustainable development has been a key concern of EIA scholars and has been reviewed by others (e.g., Cashmore et al. 2010; Morgan 2012). Studies have started to explore the potential of EIA as a tool to promote environmental justice goals in policy implementation, for example, Cashmore and Axelsson (2013) and Connelly and Richardson (2005). While the literature on environmental intermediaries has focused mainly on those engaged in international initiatives, as have been found by others (Bosselmann and Lund, 2013; Coggan et al., 2013; Hrabanski et al., 2013), our case study presents the barriers for local justice norms to travel upwards in the existing local management tools with regards to the intermediaries' involvement.

The technical experts in the EIA commission were informed as to some global sustainability and justice objectives, and actively sought to mobilize these norms into local practical arrangements. Our findings demonstrated the intermediaries' constant attempts of seeking feasible solutions between the stakeholders' needs, abilities, and budgets within the local capacity of technology and facilities. Identifying the resources needed by these institutional intermediaries, therefore, may be significant to improving local environmental practices and delivering environmental justice from a cost-effectiveness perspective. This empowerment strategy can be useful especially because many countries that possess rich forest and natural resources often suffer from limited resources available for environmental management.

6. Conclusion

This article explored and exposed the justice-related norms prioritized by intermediaries; namely consultants, academics, and governmental officers, in the technical review process of EIA in Indonesia. It also examined the platforms and resources through which justice-related norms traveled, and the factors which facilitated or constrained the negotiation in the project debates of EIA at the sub-national level. Recognitional justice is the least attentive aspect of justice to the intermediaries, and our findings suggest that the EIA governance system underlying patriarchal and hierarchical structure has contributed to the low engagement of recognitional justice concerns. The intermediaries consulted nevertheless have actively sought to negotiate and mobilize distributive and procedural concerns within the sub-national level. Social relationships and working conditions are two key considerations in affecting intermediaries' willingness to communicate for justice in this case study. Governance mechanisms that comply with national environmental laws, such as EIA, have facilitated necessary resource networks to be established and developed; such access to resources is essential to support intermediaries' works. If integrating justice-related norms into the practice of local governance is the goal of global sustainable initiatives, more attention will be required to explore potentially useful national policies and platforms to influence environmental decision-making at the sub-national level.

Appendix Interviewees' information based on self-description

All participants classified into one of these categories for anonymity:

1. Senior Government Manager (including current and former Heads, secretariats, and other senior managers of Division of AMDAL, Disaster and risk management, Environmental monitoring, Forestry, Health, Labor and transmigration, and License issuance)
2. Government Officer (including officers of Division of Environmental monitoring, Health, License issuance, Plantation, Spatial planning, and Transportation)

3. Academic (including specialists in biodiversity, hydrology, and spatial planning)
4. Academic and consultant (including specialists in biodiversity and sociology)
5. Environmental Consultant (including specialists in AMDAL, land-use licensing, and project management)

No.	Field of work	Age	Sex	Years of experience in EIA	Number of interviews
1.	Academic	42	M	16-20	1
2.	Academic	44	M	6-10	2
3.	Academic	50	M	16-20	1
4.	Academic	50	M	Less than 1	2
5.	Academic	51	M	11-15	1
6.	Academic	58	M	6-10	2
7.	Academic and consultant	45	M	-	2
8.	Academic and consultant	60	M	21-25	2
9.	Academic and consultant	63	M	21-25	1
10.	Environmental consultant	34	M	6-10	1
11.	Environmental consultant	51	M	16-20	3
12.	Environmental consultant	56	M	16-20	1
13.	Former senior government manager	49	F	6-10	2
14.	Former senior government manager	67	M	1-5	2
15.	Senior government manager	38	M	1-5	1
16.	Senior government manager	43	M	1-5	3
17.	Senior government manager	43	M	6-10	0
18.	Senior government manager	43	M	6-10	1

19.	Senior government manager	46	M	11-15	1
20.	Senior government manager	47	M	16-20	1
21.	Senior government manager	49	F	16-20	1
22.	Senior government manager	50	M	6-10	2
23.	Senior government manager	51	M	Less than 1	2
24.	Senior government manager	51	M	1-5	0
25.	Senior government manager	53	M	11-15	0
26.	Senior government manager	56	M	1-5	1
27.	Government officer	32	M	1-5	0
28.	Government officer	37	M	1-5	1
29.	Government officer	40	M	6-10	1
30.	Government officer	42	M	Less than 1	0
31.	Government officer	42	M	1-5	2
32.	Government officer	42	M	11-15	1
33.	Government officer	43	M	1-5	0
34.	Government officer	43	M	1-5	0
35.	Government officer	43	M	1-5	1
36.	Government officer	46	M	6-10	2
37.	Government officer	49	F	1-5	2
38.	Government officer	-	M	Less than 1	1

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